

### [Women In Congress Website](#)

I have always been a strong advocate for women's rights. Throughout my career I have supported equal rights, equal protection and equal justice for all women, both in the United States and in other countries.

One recent hot-button issue has been pay equity. The number of women participating in the labor market has grown significantly in recent decades. And although the ratio of a woman's salary to a man's salary has grown, women still earn only about 77 percent of every dollar earned by men. Congress has made some significant inroads toward leveling the playing field, and I look forward to continuing this work in Washington.

### **Bills I have cosponsored during the 111th Congress (2009-2010):**

- [H.R. 2103](#) - International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act of 2009 - Authorizes the president to provide assistance, including through multilateral, nongovernmental, and faith-based organizations, to prevent child marriage in developing countries and to promote the educational, health, economic, social, and legal empowerment of girls and women. Sets forth priority assistance criteria.
- [H.R. 1236](#) - Compassionate Assistance for Rape Emergencies Act of 2009 - Prohibits any Medicare funds from being provided to a hospital unless the hospital meets certain conditions related to a woman who is a victim of sexual assault.
- [H.R. 606](#) - International Women's Freedom Act of 2009 - Establishes within the Department of State an Office of International Women's Rights to be headed by an Ambassador at Large for International Women's Rights. Also establishes a federal commission reporting to Congress and the president on international women's rights.
- [H.R. 463](#) - Prevention First Act of 2009 - Aims to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies by increasing funding for Title X, expanding Medicaid family planning services, ending insurance discrimination against women, improving awareness of emergency contraception, providing compassionate assistance for victims of rape, reducing teen pregnancy rates and ensuring that federal programs provide medically accurate information.
- [H.R. 12](#) - Paycheck Fairness Act - Amends the portion of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (known as the Equal Pay Act) to revise remedies for, enforcement of, and exceptions to prohibitions against sex discrimination in the payment of wages.
- [H.R. 11](#) - Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 - Revises the statute of limitations for equal-pay lawsuits, allowing individuals who have illegally received lower wages to sue for

compensation. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was signed into law in January 2009.

### **Other important actions during the 111th Congress:**

In an exciting development for those who support women's choice, the Obama Administration in January 2009 lifted the so called Global Gag Rule, also known as the Mexico City policy.

The policy -- first imposed by President Reagan and re-instituted by President Bush on his first day in office -- severely restricted women's access to reproductive services by preventing any U.S. funds for reproductive health services from going towards family planning organizations that provide abortions, even if they do so using non-U.S. funds.

The global gag rule forced overseas health-care providers to agree not to use any funds to provide or counsel patients about abortion, or to take a public pro-choice position. These restrictions have led to dire health outcomes in the developing world, from pregnancy-related deaths to the spread of HIV/AIDS. It also led to an increase in abortions by denying basic access to contraception and thus increasing the rate of unintended pregnancy. Many international organizations chose to forego U.S. funding rather than comply with this life-threatening policy.

By repealing this policy, the Obama Administration took a big step toward reforming U.S. foreign assistance for family planning.